Washington D.C. - Today, US Reps. David Price (D-NC) and John Duncan (R-TN) introduced the SAFE (Safe Aviation Flight Enhancement) Act of 2005 to address serious deficiencies in commercial aviation black box requirements.

"In this post-9/11 world, we have seen many tragic examples that illustrate the importance of accurate evidence in the aftermath of an accident or an attack," said Price, who serves on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. "A commercial airplane's black boxes hold the key to understanding why a plane crash occurs, and the information they provide can help us figure out how to make plane travel more secure."

Currently, the NTSB requires all commercial aircraft to have two separate black boxes: a fixed cockpit voice recorder and a digital flight data recorder. The SAFE Act would require the two be combined into one system, located in two places – a fixed combination system located in the front of the airplane and a deployable combination system located in the rear of the airplane. This system, which is already used by the US Military, would greatly improve the chances that black boxes would survive all catastrophic crash scenarios, and it would enhance investigators' ability to quickly recover them, undamaged, following an accident.

This deployable technology would allow the black box to separate from the aircraft, thus avoiding the fire and crash accident zone. It is designed to float, unlike current black boxes. It also contains a more advanced Emergency Locator Transmitter, which transmits a signal to search and rescue personnel identifying the location of the recorder unit as well as the last known location of the aircraft in both land and water incidents.

"I applaud our Congressional leaders for taking the necessary steps to ensure measures are in place to prepare us in the event of another air disaster," said Jim Hall, former Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board. "The FAA has proposed significant recorder upgrades that will greatly improve the amount and quality of data collected by our black boxes. Their upgrades in conjunction with the SAFE Act requirements will not only achieve the goals of improved recorder capability and redundancy the NTSB was seeking, but will also significantly improve access to undamaged flight recorder information more immediately following aviation disasters."

Earlier this year, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Bureau of

Investigations (FBI) issued a report stating that commercial airlines remain susceptible to attack, despite billions of dollars worth of security advances.

Additionally, the 9/11 Commission Staff submitted a series of recommendations to Congress which included the need for the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to improve the survivability of black boxes. They noted that while some of black boxes on the 9/11 fight that crashed on September 11th were recovered and found to contain valuable information, others were destroyed, depriving investigators, policymakers and the public of critical information.

Price and Duncan previously introduced the SAFE Act in the 108th Congress, and soon afterward, the FAA adopted many of the bill's recommendations for improving black boxes. This new version of the SAFE Act concentrates on the original bill's most important provision, which has yet to be adopted by the FAA: the requirement that all commercial airplanes be equipped with deployable black boxes.

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